

Annotated Outline

Title: *The Dream of the Rood*: A Poetic Conversion

Thesis Statement: The persona of the poem employs different elements to highlight the influence of Christianity on the Anglo – Saxon period. Therefore, *The Dream of the Rood* represents a combination of pagan and Christian beliefs with the purpose of evangelizing.

I. Introduction

Topic Sentence: In the past, England had experienced many invasions that made it a country full of contrasts, such as, religion, culture, and language.

A. The persona of the poem employs different elements to highlight the influence of Christianity on the Anglo – Saxon period. Therefore, *The Dream of the Rood* represents a combination of pagan and Christian beliefs with the purpose of evangelizing.

B. According to Chaney, in *Paganism to Christianity in Anglo-Saxon England*, this relation between these different cultures is because of the broad Roman Empire which forces the Anglo-Saxons to convert into Christianity. Furthermore, in *Crucifixion as Annunciation the Relation of The Dream of the Rood to the Liturgy Reconsidered*, Carragain explains important Christian elements presented in the poem and their relation to some Christian ceremonies. Finally, in *Gift Giving as a Votal Element of Salvation in the Dream of the Rood*, Thieme discusses both, Christian and pagan, elements and describes their correlation.

C.S. The earliest text of *The Dream of the Rood* presents the idea of conversion into Christianity, and this concept is portrayed by the different elements of each culture. These pagan and Christian elements become one in the poem and create a new concept of religious beliefs to the Anglo-Saxons.

II. Body

A. First subpoint: Pagan elements representing the Anglo-Saxon culture

Topic Sentence: Some important pagan elements, such as the principle of *ubi sunt*, the sense of belonging, the importance of treasure, and the use of military words are represented in the poem in order to identify them with the Anglo-Saxons.

1. “where I was all alone, / Companionless;” (“The Dream of The Rood” p. 169). It presents the concept of *ubi sunt* and the important sense of companion for Anglo-Saxons.

2. "Covered with gold. The corners of the earth / Gleamed with fair jewels," ("The Dream of The Rood" p. 161). This quotation shows the importance of treasure and its relation to victory.
3. "I trembled as the warrior embraced me," ("The Dream of The Rood" p. 163). It portrays the idea of afraid and or respect for the warrior.

C.S.: Having considered some important elements and symbols of the Anglo-Saxon culture, it is clearly stated how these pagan elements represent the early traditions and beliefs of these people. However, these figures are also foreshadowing symbols of a near conversion into Christianity.

B. Second subpoint: Christian elements representing the Church's beliefs.

Topic Sentence: Some Christian elements stated in the poem are the symbolic act of Jesus' crucifixion, the perception of having a transitory life, and the importance of praising and honoring God and divine figures.

1. "They pierced me with dark nails; / The scars can still be clearly seen on me, / The open wounds of malice" ("The Dream of The Rood" p. 163). This quote illustrates the suffering of being on the cross.
2. "may fetch me from / This transitory life and carry me / To where there is great bliss and joy in heaven" ("The Dream of The Rood" p. 171). It exemplifies a very important Christian value; it emphasizes the divine treasure people will obtain in the afterlife.
3. "Now the time has come / That far and wide on earth me honour me, / And all this great and glorious creation, / And to this beacon offer prayers" ("The Dream of The Rood" p. 167). This quotation shows the expected response of the worshippers. They have to honor God and his divine symbols and be thankful for his sacrifice.

C.S.: Christian elements are connected to pagan symbols to state their similarities. However, the purpose of using them is to convert Anglo-Saxons into Christianity. These elements are related in a clever way to persuade people.

V. Conclusion:

1. Pagan elements represent Anglo-Saxons beliefs; they illustrate the way in which these people were raised. However, these elements are also a double-edged sword because they are combined to Christian symbols, and this combination, in a way, betrays Anglo – Saxon culture. As a result, there are some "similarities" between both faiths that force Anglo-Saxons to convert.
2. The arguments stated in this essay are similar to the experts' information found because both argue the idea of connection between the two elements aforementioned. However, some authors highlighted the presence of more Christian principles than pagan.

Works Cited

- Carragain, E. O. "Crucifixion as Annunciation the Relation of "The Dream of the Rood" to the Liturgy Reconsidered" *English Studies* 63. 6 (2002): 487-505.
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